

PACAF commander selects next command chief

By Tech. Sgt. Chris Haug
PACAF News Service

HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE, Hawaii – The Pacific Air Forces commander selected the current 5th Air Force and United States Forces, Japan, command chief master sergeant to become the command's next command chief master sergeant June 6.

Chief Master Sgt. Gerald R. Murray will soon replace Chief Master Sgt. Ronald W. Crowl as the top enlisted advisor for the command. Murray is expected to arrive at the headquarters July 30.

Crowl's next assignment will be at 611th Air Support Group, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. His specific duties will be as the deputy program manager and chief of Ballistic Missile Defense bed-down operations at Eareckson Air Force Station, Alaska.

Murray is currently responsible for the readiness and welfare of more than 14,000 enlisted members assigned to 5th Air Force and the joint service enlisted members assigned to United States



Chief Master Sgt. Gerald R. Murray
5th Air Force and United States Forces,
Japan,

Forces, Japan. He is also charged with maintaining a strong bilateral relationship with the Japanese enlisted leadership, serving to foster better understanding and improved readiness of allied forces.

Prior to his assignment at 5th Air Force, Murray served as command chief master sergeant for the 347th Wing, Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

As an aircraft maintenance superintendent, Murray has deployed to three contingencies. He served as production superintendent for the 354th Wing (Provisional), King Faud International Airport, Saudi Arabia, from August 1990 to March 1991. He returned to Southwest Asia in December 1995 where he served as maintenance superintendent, 70th Fighter Squadron, Al Jaber, Kuwait. In 1997, he served as command chief master sergeant for the 347th Wing (Provisional) Sheikh Isa Air Base, Bahrain.

His other assignments include McChord AFB, Wash.; Myrtle Beach AFB, S.C.; Incirlik Air Base, Turkey; Shaw AFB, S.C.; and MacDill AFB, Fla.

DOD slows anthrax vaccination program again

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — The Department of Defense is further curtailing the anthrax immunization program due to inadequate supplies of the vaccine, DOD officials said June 11.

Effective immediately, only servicemembers assigned to "special mission units" will receive the six-shot series.

The action is necessary because of delays in DOD receiving Food and Drug Administration-approved vaccine from Bioport Corp., the sole source of the vaccine.

The FDA is expected to approve Bioport, based in Lansing, Mich., for full production by March, said Marine Maj. Gen. Randall West, special assistant to the deputy secretary of defense for chemical and biological protection.

"We have not yet been able to re-establish the supply of certified safe and effective vaccine to continue the program on the schedule," West said.

The contractor is working to achieve FDA approval

of their new expanded manufacturing facility as soon as possible, he said. There are currently about 30,000 doses of vaccine available for use now.

But until then, DOD will conserve the dwindling supply of approved vaccine. Only small special operations units, people working on research and some congressionally mandated studies will continue to receive the vaccine, West said.

This is the third slowdown for the immunization program. In December 1999, DOD stopped inoculating servicemembers other than those deploying to Korea and the Persian Gulf. In November, DOD stopped inoculating servicemembers bound for Korea. Now servicemembers deploying to Southwest Asia will stop receiving the vaccine.

"I wish we had vaccine available to continue the protocols and to continue vaccinating all of our people deploying there," West said.

About 13,000 U.S. servicemembers are deployed to Southwest Asia. DOD and U.S. Central Command will have sufficient antibiotics on hand for post-exposure treatment in case of an attack.

Troops will have to rely on other forms of protection to an even greater degree, such as chemical and biological protection suits, detectors and intelligence collection and gathering, West said.

In his opinion, West said it is imperative that DOD resume the vaccination regime as soon as possible.

"The sooner we can provide this vaccination protection to the entire force, the better I'll sleep at night," he said. "The weaponized form of anthrax can be delivered by several munitions and is a very deadly threat. You can't see this, you can't smell it, you can't taste it, it's very difficult to detect and if you haven't been vaccinated, by the time you detect symptoms of anthrax, it's too late to save a person's life."

People who have begun the vaccination regime will not have to start over when the program resumes.

"Fortunately, even a couple of shots provide some resistance to anthrax," West said. "They'll be able to start the protocols where they left off."

"When we do have the vaccine replenished, the first place the vaccine will go is Southwest Asia," West said.

AFPC launches 21st century personnel data system

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) — Despite a tentative start, the Air Force's personnel data system, dubbed 'MilMod,' launched June 5, transferring millions of airmen's records into a central database, and capping a five-year effort to bring the service's personnel system into the 21st century.

"Although the implementation was delayed by a few days because of some data problems we caught with our final test checks, we're working to make the transition as painless as possible for all our customers," said Lt. Col. Richard Treasure, chief of the systems requirements division at the Air Force Personnel Center here.

"We appreciate everyone's patience with their local military personnel flights," he said. "It may be a bit bumpy for a while when they're trying to complete personnel actions."

The new system will enable airmen in the future to transact much of their personnel business from their desktops. The center has moved about 1.7 million records of total force airmen into the new system that will affect not only cus-

tomers at every military personnel flight, but also more than 50 government agencies and organizations.

"This has been, and continues to be, a huge undertaking," Treasure said. "Our people haven't gotten much sleep for the last few months, and we continue day and night with teams to monitor and fix the transition problems we're sure to have" as MilMod gets its first real-world workout, he said.

Officials at the center call MilMod perhaps the biggest such system in the world and tell of Fortune 500 companies who are already visiting and taking away ideas.

"This kind of sets the cutting-edge standard in personnel systems," Treasure said.

But a lot of the improvements will not been seen by airmen right away, he said.

"We're optimistic that this new system will dramatically improve promotion and assignment notifications and almost every other personnel action in the Air Force of tomorrow," Treasure said.

The new system supports all "life cycle" personnel management functions

from recruiting through separation or retirement. Each day, more than 15,000 personnel specialists will have real-time access to the database to update and print out relevant records. It also eliminates duplicate data entry — making it possible for personnel transactions to be completed in minutes and hours rather than days.

For instance, under the new system, an assignment confirmation and notification should take perhaps 20 minutes instead of the seven to 10 days, officials said.

"Although delays may occur in the initial weeks of using MilMod, we anticipate the software systems will run very well," Treasure said. "However, because of the sheer volume of information we're trying to migrate from the old to the new system, we may see some problems arise from bad or missing data."

"We can't catch every problem before it happens, but those we know about we're committed to fixing so our customers are inconvenienced as little as possible," Treasure said. "We've gone to great lengths to have our people, Air-

Force wide, trained and ready. We brought (more than) 300 personnel specialists here to train hands-on, and we continue to conduct training. We have tested, improved and re-tested the system. We're as ready with training and testing as we can be."

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